

**ALGER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**August 17, 2015**

**Minutes are subject to corrections and approval**

Pursuant to recess, the Alger County Board of Commissioners convened in the conference room of the county building at 4:02 p.m. on the above date.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Doucette with the following Commissioners present: Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

The board of commissioners said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment session was open. Thomas Bowler was present and said that the issue of out-of-sync fire numbers and the ingress and egress issue will conclude to any future advancement and will no longer be pursued from the advice of his lawyer. There was no further comment from the floor; thus, the public comment session was closed.

It was moved by Commissioner Rondeau and seconded by Commissioner Pullen to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of July 13, 2015 and the Regular Board meeting minutes of July 20, 2015 with corrections. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner VanLandschoot to amend the consent agenda moving item numbers 11 and 12 to be numbers 6 and 7, moving the old item numbers 6 and 7 to item numbers 11 and 12, and adding an a. Attendance at the MAC Conference and b. Authorizing the chair to sign an amended Exchange Agreement for the airport to Old Business. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

Steve Webber was present to give an update on the jail expansion. He discussed that the City of Munising has expressed concerns regarding building criteria; however, Alger County is exempt from the City of Munising's zoning requirements. Alger County sought counsel advice from Silver & Van Essen and the project is back on track. He discussed the 60 day lag period with the USDA. Sgt. Webber is suggesting signage to notify the public about the jail expansion. The majority of the builder's bidding process is complete and the bid packages are going out. He said that construction should start after Labor Day. Sgt. Webber said that the jail is in need of a nurse's station and plumbing repairs. The costs of the plumbing fixes are equivalent to the contractor's estimate. He said that the alley by the jail was vacated by the City of Munising but is not documented as so. There was some discussion regarding future inmate housing in the new jail and additional parking spaces.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to authorize Robb Ferguson to proceed with vacating an alley on county property through circuit court. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to authorize a letter of support for CUPPAD regarding EDA Power Planning Assistance funding. See the following letter:

August 17, 2015

EDA ó Chicago Regional Office  
111 North Canal Street  
Suite 855  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Tamayo,

On behalf of the Alger County Board of Commissioners, I would like to express wholehearted support for the Superior Watershed Partnership's application ó in partnership with CUPPAD Regional Commission- for EDA POWER Planning Assistance funding.

This opportunity will address the region's top priorities ó energy sustainability and workforce development - in order to boost economic development. These priorities have been identified by members of the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance and the Central U.P. Regional Prosperity Collaborative and have also been incorporated into the regional CEDS plan.

This project will result in a plan to leverage the region's assets to promote energy efficiency and clean energy generation as well as the development of a clean-energy jobs pipeline. Energy efficiency has been shown to be an effective economic development and job creation strategy as it boosts local spending and investment.

We firmly believe that this EDA POWER Planning Assistance funding will provide the Central Upper Peninsula region with an opportunity to prepare for a clean energy future.

Sincerely,

Jerry Doucette, Chairman  
Alger County Board of Commissioners

Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Rondeau and seconded by Commissioner Pullen to authorize by-passing the bidding process and authorize Bergdahl to fix the airport tractor in an approximate amount of \$1,500. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

Terry Burkhart was on the phone to discuss financial concerns including county employee contracts. He said that September 1, 2015 is the target to reopen. He said that the courthouse rejected the tentative agreement and submitted a new offer and that their negotiations are ongoing. He said that the Court Staff has a three-year deal but can be reopened regarding wages, retirement, and health benefits. The Sheriff's Union contract expires 12/31/2015. Terry Burkhart expressed the concerns of the unfunded liabilities. For decades the budgetary status of counties allowed for generous benefit packages. The current financial situation has changed the dynamics of the county's pension plans. Alger County is one of only a few counties with retiree healthcare. Attorney Burkhart said that retiree life and health insurance costs have grown immensely. He said that Michigan First Response never paid Stryker for the new ambulance, and that the title is being held as collateral. This situation amounts to \$100,000 of potential liability. Alger County is also facing a \$103,000 yearly shortfall as a result of the DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) leaving the building. He said that there will also be an estimated \$32,000 drop in revenue from the state liquor tax changes and that revenue sharing will see losses as well as federal PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes). He said that the DTR (Delinquent Tax Revolving) Fund has been used in the past to cover pension shortfalls; however, Alger County is in a perfect storm of budgetary losses. Terry Burkhart was looking to cut retiree health insurance from the courthouse union, but it was rejected. It was discussed that serious budget discussions are coming in October. Alger County is only one of a few counties without an Administrator or Controller. Attorney Burkhart would like to have a "numbers guy" to discuss budgetary issues with. Alger County has been operating on a shoe-string budget, but the situation only seems to be getting worse. He said that road patrol needs notice by September 1, 2015 to reopen contracts. The County is obligated to have a balanced budget, and all contracts could be opened at once to renegotiate. He said that the employees and the public need to understand the serious budget issues and that the County is under serious pressures. Attorney Burkhart is requesting direction in upcoming negotiations as it pertains to employee benefits and the budget. Commissioner Doucette expressed concern over the 2016 budget and believes it is prudent to send out the Notices of Intent. Attorney Burkhart stated that the ability to pay is the number one focus in any labor negotiation and "the budget dog has to wag the negotiation tail." He said that the American Association of Liability study shows counties were not listing retiree life and health as liabilities. Any changes take time to work through the system, but will eventually lead to savings. It was moved by Commissioner Rondeau and seconded by Commissioner Pullen to authorize Attorney Burkhart to issue Notice of Intents to reopen the contracts to all of the unions and to include the courthouse union. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to authorize a safety upgrade for the elevator pit area with Otis Elevator Company in the amount of \$480. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner VanLandschoot and seconded by Commissioner Pullen to authorize payment to Douglas W. Van Essen in the amount of \$1,000 for an opinion dealing with the City of Munising's zoning. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to by-pass the bidding process and to authorize the clerk to purchase a card maker for CPLs and employee IDs in the amount of \$1,490. Monies are to be split with the sheriff's department (\$372.50 from the jail and \$372.50 from the ambulance fund) and \$745 from the CPL fund in the clerk's office. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

Old business was next. Commissioner Pullen expressed interest in attending the MAC Conference. Commissioner Doucette said that his attendance is paid for. Commissioner Doucette stated Pam Johnson and Commissioner Mattson have yet to notify of their intent to attend or not. It was moved by Commissioner Rondeau and seconded by Commissioner VanLandschoot to authorize attendance to the MAC (Michigan Association of Counties) Conference for Commissioner Doucette, Commissioner Pullen, Pam Johnson, Mary Ann Froberg and Commissioner Mattson. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

There was discussion that the appraisal value has changed in the airport land swap. The Forest Service is losing a small amount of land and is requesting an additional \$2,000 and an amended land swap exchange agreement. It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to authorize Jerry to sign the amended Land Exchange Agreement with the changed legal description of Non-Federal parcel #3 and in the appraisal value. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner VanLandschoot to authorize payment to NorthCare Network for their substance abuse appropriation in the amount of \$6,841.50. The monies are to come from their appropriation (101-631-969.000). Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner Pullen and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to authorize payment of the board bills. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

It was moved by Commissioner VanLandschoot and seconded by Commissioner Rondeau to approve the financial reports for all funds. A full 30-page report is available upon request with the treasurer. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes ó Commissioners Pullen, Rondeau, VanLandschoot and Doucette. Nays ó none. Absent ó Commissioner Mattson.

There were no miscellaneous financial matters.

There were no resolutions.

Commissioner Pullen stated she priced a mower with Commissioner Rondeau at the Golf Course since the airport mower will need to be replaced soon. A new mower is \$20,000 with a 10-year life expectancy based on comparable equipment. She said that they are actively looking for other options. Commissioner Rondeau was surprised that the airport tractor is only at half its running time. He said that he would like to meet out at the airport with John on Wednesday. Commissioner VanLandschoot said that he will be sitting in on DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) and AMCAB (Alger Marquette Community Action Board) meetings this week and will have reports for July and August as he gets them. Commissioner Doucette said that he is continuing to work with State Representatives and MAC on the DHHS issue. Community Corrections is going to be a real issue and they are in the process of speaking with State Representatives and the DOC (Department of Corrections), but the program is likely to be cut. Undersheriff Brock discussed the possibility of using electronic tethers for offenders who can still do community service work. Commissioner Doucette discussed to expect legislation regarding the big box stores and that the tax revenue shortfalls from the dark stores tax issue are already estimated at over \$73,000,000 across 33 counties.

Correspondence was briefly read. First a Notice of Intent Comment Form from CUPPAD regarding clean energy jobs and second a Notice of Intent Comment Form from AMCAB concerning FY 2015-16 Head Start and Early Head Start Program. These will be placed in the board file.

Board comments were next. Commissioner Pullen expressed interest in attending the MERS (Municipal Employees Retirement System) conference on October 8-9, 2015 in Grand Rapids and would really like to go with Joel and Mary Ann. Commissioner Doucette stated that more attending the conference would be beneficial and that notices will be given to each department to see if they would like to attend. A discounted rate is available for registering before September 9, 2015. Commissioner Rondeau expressed concern over the current fiscal environment and that he wrote to the Congressman about the Iranian deal. Commissioner Doucette discussed sequestration and that USDA loans are being cut. Commissioner Doucette believes that the county is heading in the right direction.

Commissioner Mattson arrived at 6:23 p.m.

Commissioner VanLandschoot stated we have a good core of people and we are doing the right things. Commissioner Doucette said that he has asked Senator Casperson to swear him in as the MAC President. He said that Senator Casperson has helped Michigan counties immensely, and has been very good to Alger County. Deputy Clerk Joel VandeVelde stated it will take time for the changes the board has made to show.

Public comment session was open. There was no public comment from the floor; thus, the public comment session was closed.

It was moved by Commissioner Rondeau and seconded by Commissioner VanLandschoot to adjourn this meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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Jerry Doucette, Chairman  
Alger County Board of Commissioners

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Mary Ann Froberg  
Alger County Clerk